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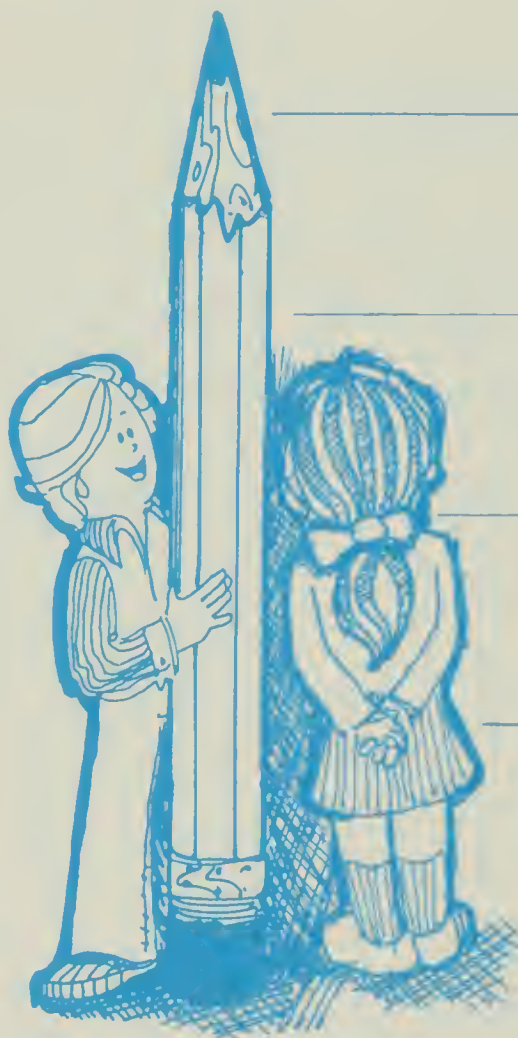
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The Mystery of the Missing Dreams



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Care Bears™

The Mystery of the Missing Dreams

Written by Penelope Bender

Illustrated by Renee Tuttle

Cover illustration by Elena



Hi, everyone. Welcome to your Care Bears Read-Along Book. Every time you hear this sound . . . it means it's time to turn the page in your storybook. Now, if you're ready, we'll start "The Mystery of the Missing Dreams." And remember to turn the page every time you hear the sound.

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It was just a whisper past moonrise in Care-a-Lot. After a very long day of solving the caring problems of the world, the Care Bears, tired but happy about all the good work they had done, had just snuggled in for a well-deserved night of sleep and beautiful dreams.

Dreaming, you see, is one of the Care Bears' favorite things.



Each night, they would dream of faraway places and many wondrous adventures. Then, in the morning, they would meet on the banks of the Rainbow River and share the dreams they had dreamed the night before. Sometimes, when they believed extra hard, they could make their dreams come true.

But on this particular night, something was very, very wrong. Although each of the Bears had fallen sound asleep as soon as they'd cuddled into their soft cloud comforters, they couldn't seem to find their dreams. Even Bedtime Bear, who is, of course, the best dreamer in Care-a-Lot, didn't dream. Without their dreams, the Care Bears spent a very long and very restless night in Care-a-Lot.





Early the next morning, the Care Bears gathered in the Sunbeam Meadow to discuss the very strange happenings of the night before.

Cheer Bear was the first to tell the others, "I just don't understand it. I didn't have a single dream, and that's never happened."

"I couldn't find my dreams either," piped up Wish Bear, "and I was really looking forward to exploring the beautiful Honey Valley I'd found in my dream the night before."

"I had the same problem," added Funshine Bear. "I was just about to discover the secret at the end of the eastern rainbow. Now, without my dreams, I may never find out what it is."

"Hmmmph, you think that's bad," grumbled Grumpy Bear. "I was just getting ready to dig into a whole room full of Grams' fresh-baked honey lace cookies when my dream disappeared. Just the thought of all those delicious cookies being lost somewhere in Dreamland makes me hungry."





So the Care Bears sat down in the tall meadow grass and thought very hard about what to do about finding their missing dreams. They couldn't know that hidden behind a large black storm cloud just out of notice of Care-a-Lot, they were being watched by a pair of icy-gray eyes that belonged to none other than the notorious Dream Thief.

The Dream Thief, you see, was a nasty villain who was so uncaring that he was never able to have good dreams of his own. Because of this, he hunted the world over for other people's beautiful dreams.





When he found them, he snatched them up and locked them away in his secret Safe Place – a secret hiding place in the northernmost part of Care-a-Lot. This is exactly what he did with the Care Bears' beautiful dreams.

“Hee! Hee! Hee!” laughed the Dream Thief. “Now, even the Care Bears will know how nasty it is not to have sweet dreams!”

As the Dream Thief watched, the Care Bears were continuing to try and figure out how to solve the mystery of their missing dreams.

"Maybe our dreams decided to take a vacation," suggested Cheer Bear. "I mean, we do work them awfully hard sometimes, trying to dream up wonderful ways to make the world a more caring place."

Friend Bear didn't agree. "Our dreams wouldn't do that! At least, not without telling us first."

Good Luck Bear had another idea. "They could have gotten lost on their way down from Dreamland. If they did, they're probably wandering around this very minute looking for us."

"That's possible," said Cheer Bear. "But it seems very strange that *all* of our dreams got lost at one time."

The Care Bears all nodded, then settled down to do some more thinking. All the rest of the day, they thought and thought, but couldn't come up with a single clue that would help them discover just where their dreams had gone.





Finally, just as the sun was setting, the Care Bears decided to head for home. Perhaps, with a good night's sleep, they would be able to find an answer the next morning.

"Good night," said Cheer Bear with a yawn.



"It certainly won't be a very good night without our dreams to look forward to," said Grumpy Bear, frowning. "I hope we solve this mystery soon. I know those honey lace cookies are waiting for me somewhere."

Sadly, each of the Care Bears drifted off to sleep, ready for another dreamless night.





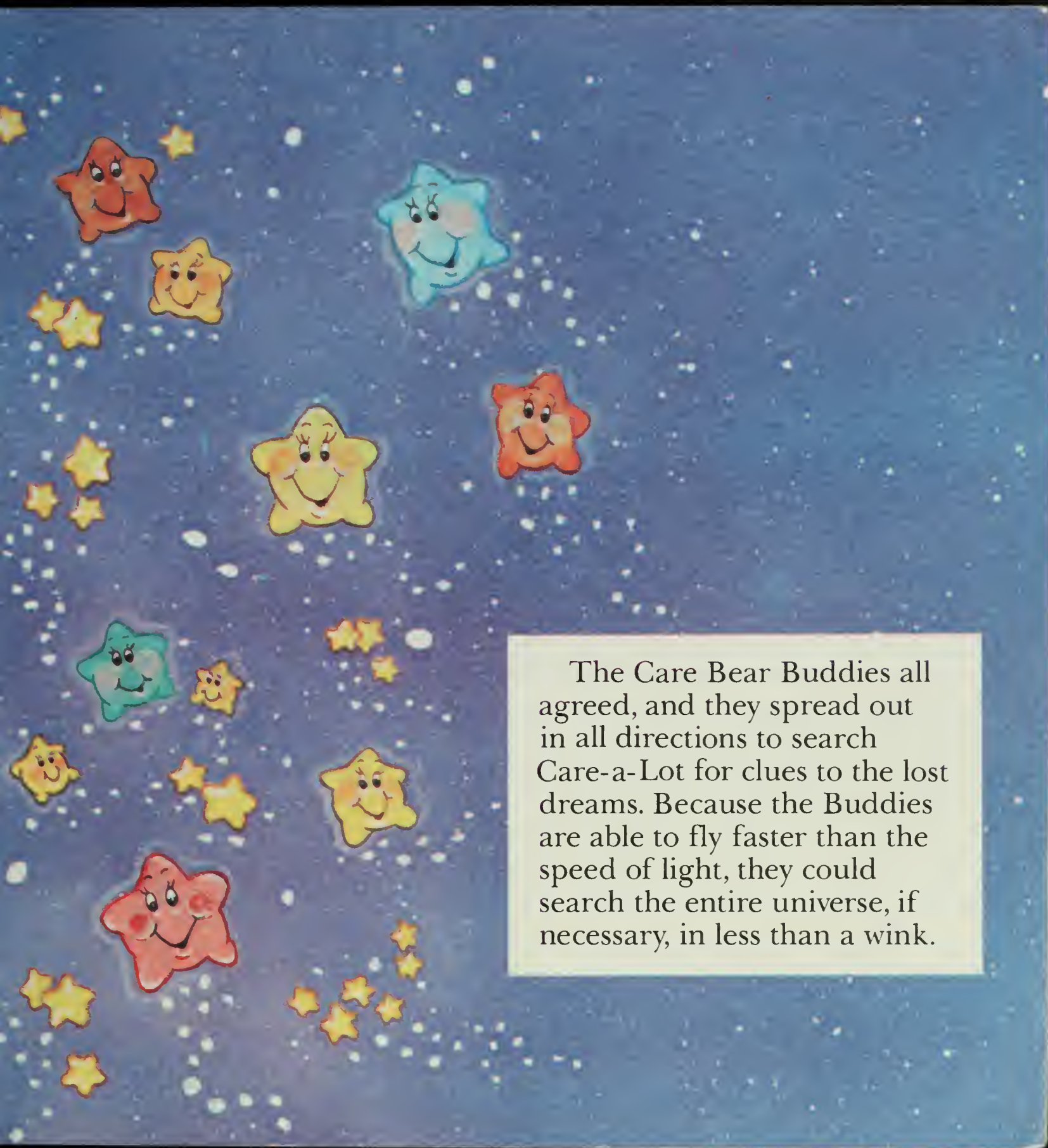
Not far from the clouds where the Care Bears were sleeping, some special friends and helpers were gathered together, trying to figure out if there was some way they could track down the missing dreams. Those special friends and helpers were those sweet little stars called the Care Bear Buddies.

"There has to be some way we can help!" exclaimed Cheer Buddy.

"Yes, I know," added Tenderheart Buddy. "All of the Care Bears seem so sad without their dreams. There has to be something we can do."

"Whatever we do, we've got to work fast," said Good Luck Buddy. "If the Care Bears get any sadder, it will be awfully hard for them to continue their caring deeds."





The Care Bear Buddies all agreed, and they spread out in all directions to search Care-a-Lot for clues to the lost dreams. Because the Buddies are able to fly faster than the speed of light, they could search the entire universe, if necessary, in less than a wink.

Tenderheart Buddy had headed north out of Care-a-Lot and while exploring the northernmost region, he heard a faint cry for help coming from behind a strange black cloud. Flying over to investigate, he discovered a dream trying to squeeze through a hole in the Dream Thief's Safe Place. It was Bedtime Bear's dream!

"Please help me!" cried Bedtime Bear's dream. "The other dreams are locked inside. We have to get word to the Care Bears before that nasty Dream Thief takes over all of Dreamland!"

Tenderheart Buddy gave the dream a gentle tug and, in moments, it was free.

"Phew! Thanks!" said Bedtime's dream. "The other dreams sent me for help since I was the smallest and could fit through the tiniest hole in the Safe Place. But we must hurry and get to the Care Bears before the Dream Thief returns from snatching other dreams."







So, the two flew off to Care-a-Lot where they found the Care Bears sleeping peacefully in their cozy little beds. Without a sound, the dream slipped back into place and explained to Bedtime Bear just what had happened.

Awaking with a start, Bedtime Bear shouted, "I've got it! I know what happened to our dreams and where we can find them. Let's go, Care Bears!"



Quick as a flash, all the Care Bears followed Bedtime Bear as he flew up to the dark, angry cloud. On the way, Bedtime Bear explained to them what his dream had told him, ending with the warning, "We must be very careful! I understand that the Dream Thief is a very nasty character."

"Anyone who steals dreams *has* to pretty nasty," agreed Funshine Bear.

In less than a wink, the Care Bears were outside the storm cloud.

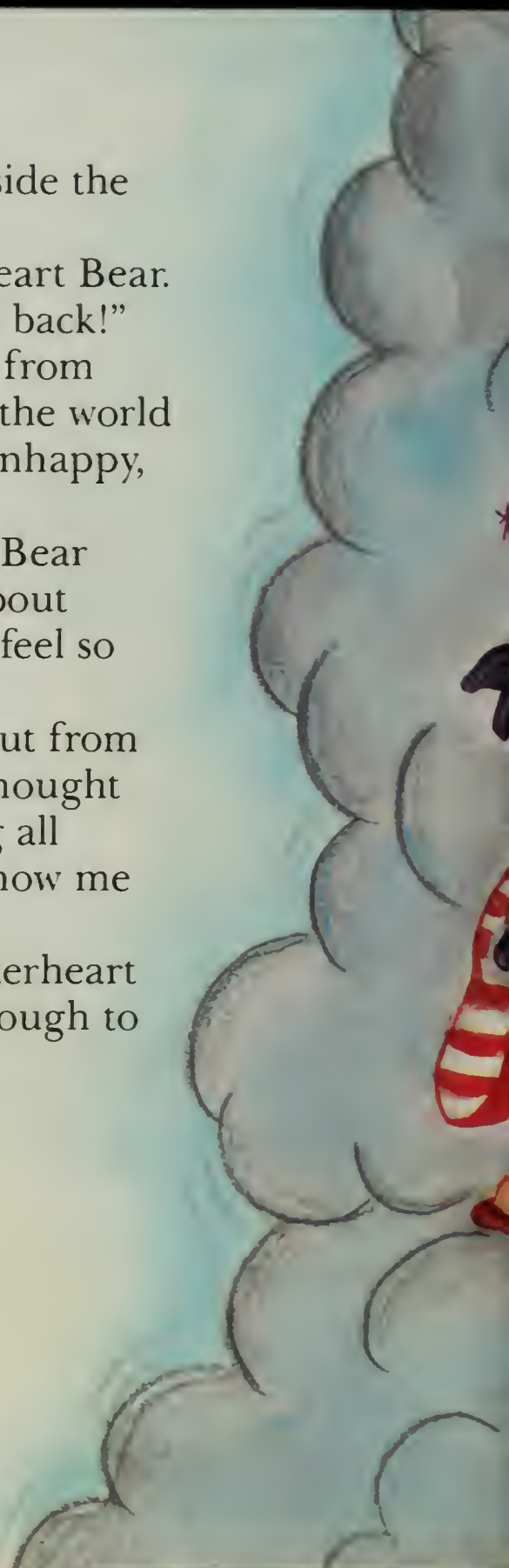
"Come out, Dream Thief!" shouted Tenderheart Bear. "We know you're in there! We want our dreams back!"

"Not on a bet!" the Dream Thief called back from inside the cloud. "Why should everyone else in the world have sweet dreams except me? If *I* have to be unhappy, then everyone else will be too!"

"But you *don't* have to be so unhappy," Cheer Bear explained. "People who take the time to care about others always have good dreams, because they feel so good about themselves."

"Really?" replied the Dream Thief, coming out from his hiding place in the cloud. "I guess I never thought about it that way. You see, I've lived so very long all alone, without anyone ever taking the time to show me how to care."

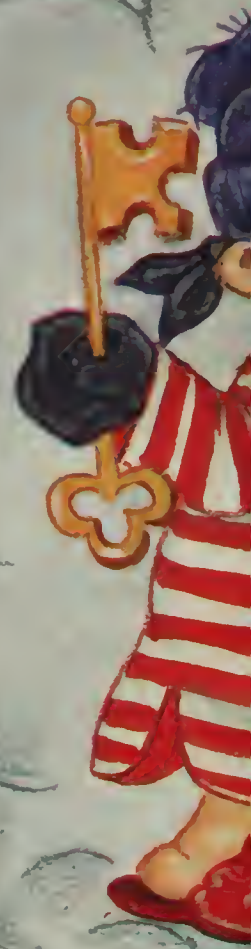
"We can teach you how to care," replied Tenderheart Bear. "And the first step will be for you care enough to free all the dreams you've caught."





Reaching deep into his pocket, the Dream Thief took out a large golden key and unlocked the Safe Place. In a golden flash, all the dreams he had hidden inside flew off to find the dreamers they had left behind.

"Hooray!" cheered the Care Bears. "We did it!"





In the days that followed, the Care Bears taught the Dream Thief all the many wonderful things they knew about caring. In time, he became so very loving that the Bears put him in charge of locating missing dreams and returning them to their owners. Happy with this wonderful new way of life, the Dream Thief never went back to his evil ways... and is now very proud of the title the Care Bears gave him — the Dream Detective, the very special assistant to the Care Bears — the makers of dreams come true!



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